



AGHET
The Great Catastrophe

D Dresdner
Sinfoniker

*In memory of Vahide Akman-
Grandmother of Marc Sinan*



A concert project of the Dresdner Sinfoniker
Featuring musicians from Armenia, Turkey and Europe
In commemoration of the Armenian Genocide

In cooperation with HELLERAU – European Centre of the Arts Dresden,
Radialsystem V Berlin, No Borders Orchestra and Anadolu Kültür

Creative Europe, Hauptstadtkulturfonds, Landeshauptstadt Dresden - Amt für Kultur und Denkmalschutz, Kulturstiftung
Dresden der Dresdner Bank, Kulturstiftung des Freistaates Sachsen und Fonds Soziokultur



In Turkish, *âğıt* is the term used to describe a wail, the audible expression of mourning. However, to this day, there is still no commonly accepted name for what happened to the Armenian nation in modern-day Turkey in the 2nd decade of the 20th century and the series of events which unfolded on April 24, 1915. Before the term genocide was defined by the United Nations in 1948, Armenian authors described the criminal expulsion of their people from Turkey as the *Aghet* – or catastrophe.

The massacre and death marches in the Ottoman Empire are estimated to have led to the death of up to 1.5 million Armenians. As the most important Turkish ally during the First World War, the German Empire was also embroiled in these criminal acts: The German Foreign Office saw fit to ignore the reports of deportations and attacks by the Young Turks. Some German officers even played an active role in the crime committed against the Armenian population.

Nowadays, most researchers regard the events of 1915 as the first systematic annihilation of a nation – an act which served as a blueprint for all subsequent ethnically motivated campaigns of destruction and the animosity which persists even to this very day. Whether the Holocaust, Cambodia, Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, Darfur or the turmoil in East Timor – wherever you look, violence is motivated by the cultural or religious background of its victims.

Due to the unabated volatility on the geopolitical stage, *Aghet* does not overly dwell on delivering a sophisticated artistic act of commemoration, instead opting to interact with the audience to create a new code of practice with implications that extend well beyond the confines of a concert hall.

Commemorating what happened, this unique initiative, held to coincide with the hundredth anniversary of the start of the deportations is used by three composers from Armenia, Turkey and Germany as a chance for a new beginning. In Cooperation with the No Borders Orchestra musicians from former Yugoslavia are playing together with German, Armenian and Turkish musicians. The Dresdner Sinfoniker set up the *Aghet* concert project as an impressive act of reconciliation which points the way forward on how to deal with the aftermath of conflict throughout the world. For a peace-loving world born from the rubble of the past.

Following on from *Hasretim* and *Dede Korkut*, *Aghet* is the third and final part of a trilogy in which the Dresdner Sinfoniker deal with the history and culture of Anatolia and the Caucasus region, and wrestle with the concepts of background and identity. A musical exploration of a region where the Orient meets the Occident and which has been transformed and pervaded by both, and whose significance as a cultural bridge it is impossible to overemphasize.



Concert Programme:

Zeynep Gedizlioğlu, Turkey

Notes from the Silent One (world premiere)

for string orchestra

Vache Sharafyan, Armenia

Surgite Gloriam (German First Premiere)

for viola, duduk, french horn, baritone, boy soprano and string orchestra

Helmut Oehring, Germany

Massaker, hört ihr MASSAKER! (World Premiere)

for solo-guitar/voice, 12-part female choir and string orchestra

Marc Sinan, guitar

Matthias Worm, viola

Araik Bartikian, duduk

Carl Thiemt, baritone

Members of Dresdner Kammerchor and AuditivVokal

Olaf Katzer, choir rehearsal

Dresdner Sinfoniker with international guests

Andrea Molino, conductor

Compositions and specially commissioned works from Turkey (Zeynep Gedizlioğlu), Armenia (Vache Sharafyan) and Germany (Helmut Oehring) will constitute the musical backbone of the concert project. In many cases, the high level of commitment demonstrated by the artists involved in *Aghet* derives from deeply personal experiences and a heartfelt desire to get all people everywhere to perceive cultural diversity as enrichment.

Just like the young, multi-award winning composer Zeynep Gedizlioğlu who, while growing up in Izmir, discovered what she likes to call the „familiar yet strange“ – the omnipresent traces of a broad diversity of cultures in everyday Turkish life. Pursuing these traces, investigating them and transforming them into new sounds is a cause deep to her heart, both artistically and personally: In 2007, Zeynep Gedizlioğlu heard the shot with which the Armenian journalist Hrant Dink was murdered in broad daylight in Istanbul by a Turkish nationalist. At his funeral, thousands of mourners chanted the words „We are Hrant Dink. We are Armenians.“ Zeynep Gedizlioğlu’s string quartet, *Susma* (Don’t be silent!), is dedicated to the late journalist. Her piece titled *Isimsiz*, which was penned for a string orchestra, will be premiered during *Aghet*.

The historical background to the *Aghet* is intertwined in a very special way with the family history of the solo guitarist Marc Sinan, as he has both Armenian and Turkish roots, as well as German. His Armenian grandmother lost her parents as a result of the deportations that followed April 24, 1915. She grew up as an orphan with a highly devout Muslim family on the Black Sea. However, this Turkish family were unable to reconcile the expulsion of their neighbours with their faith. Marc Sinan will play the solo part in Helmut Oehring’s *Requiem Concerto* for solo guitar/voice, 12-part female choir and string orchestra.



Asik Mübariz and friend with Marc Sman

„The musical score is intended to represent a source of power in which the destruction and injuries sustained are transformed into new energy, a type of food for the soul for subsequent generations.“ This is how Helmut Oehring sums up his compositional approach. As the child of deaf-mute parents who considered the language of the „hearing world“ to be something alien and hostile, Helmut Oehring has first-hand experience of the pain brought about by the failure of all attempts at communication. Nowadays regarded as one of the most eminent exponents of contemporary music, he has been awarded numerous prizes over the years.

The composer Vache Sharafyan lives and teaches in Yerevan, the city of his birth, and his works have received worldwide acclaim: The New York Times, for example, heaped praise on his „unconventional intonation“ and „majestic combination“ of a vast array of different instruments. Among others, Vache Sharafian composes for Yo-Yo Ma’s Silk Road Ensemble. His creative genius has won him many awards. To date, his works have been performed at locations such as the Carnegie Hall, Stanford University and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Hall. *Surgite Gloriam*, his double concerto for viola and duduk, will have its German premiere during *Aghet* and will be performed by the duduk soloist Araik Bartikian and the German viola soloist Matthias Worm.

The core orchestra for *Aghet* will be equally composed of musicians from Armenia, Turkey, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Germany. In addition to the highly symbolic act of pooling their talents to make music, the artists will also develop a publication during the joint production time. This publication will act as a foundation for engaging in dialogue with the public, who will not only be confronted with the facts during the actual performances but will also be drawn into the debate via numerous other platforms.



Dresdner Sinfoniker conducted by Andrea Molino, »Hasretim« on October 9th 2010 at Hellerau

The Dresdner Sinfoniker are amongst the leading symphony orchestras for contemporary music. The ensemble's productions- which feature musicians from almost every important European orchestra - have received numerous awards (including the UNESCO special prize "Welthorizont" and the ECHO for classical music). Yet the quality of the musicians is not strictly confined to musical excellence. The Dresdner Sinfoniker are a laboratory for multimedia projects, making sounds visible and colours audible. Their recording conditions are always exceptional: instead of sitting in an orchestra pit, the orchestra might be seated on the balconies of an industrialized apartment block (Hochhaussinfonie, 2006); or the conductor, instead of standing in front of his musicians, is broadcast live, like a hologram from another world (Erstes Ferndirigat der Welt, 2008).

The Dresdner Sinfoniker always set themselves exceptional artistic challenges: what does the Apocalypse sound like? Shriek like the wailing of a siren or deafening like an explosion? Or noiseless, like the uncanny silence of the scorched bodies? (Barfuss durch Hiroshima, 2015). They also ask questions such as: What happens when motorised musicians, under the baton of an old traffic policeman, intone the swansong of the GDR somewhere between C Major and CO2? (Der Verkehrspolizist vom Schillerplatz, 2016).

The Dresdner Sinfoniker lived through the fall of the Berlin Wall; it is therefore no coincidence that they not only want to forge new creative passages between different artistic domains but also to tear down walls, such as those between Israel and Palestine (Symphony for Palestine, 2013), Turkey and Armenia (Aghet, 2015), Russia and Ukraine (Panzerkreuzer Potemkin, 2017). The Dresdner Sinfoniker's big open-air events, featuring large screen projections and live improvisation, are complex "musical scores of events" (Ferdinand Kriwet). They have the artistic power to make audiences sit up and take notice.

Event Dates:

27.11.2015 World premiere at Radialsystem Berlin
28.11.2015 Concert at Radialsystem Berlin

January 2016 to April 2016:

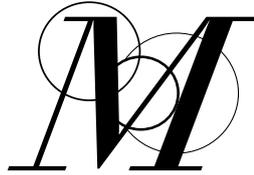
Mediation project with 2 Dresden schools „*Die 40 Tage des Musa Dagh*“

29.04.2016 Premiere of the school project in Hellerau - Europäisches Zentrum der Künste Dresden
30.04.2016 Concert in Hellerau - Europäisches Zentrum der Künste Dresden

Followed by a tour to Belgrad, Istanbul and Yerevan in 2016 or 2017.



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NO BORDERS ORCHESTRA



HELLERAU

EUROPÄISCHES ZENTRUM
DER KÜNSTE DRESDEN
EUROPEAN CENTER FOR
THE ARTS DRESDEN



ANADOLU KÜLTÜR



RADIALSYSTEM-V-
SPACE FOR ARTS AND IDEAS



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